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Subject: First Principles of Religion

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FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE WISDOM-RELIGION.

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The request has often been made that we set out a simple declaration of the principles of religion as they should be understood by a student taking up the mystic and occult sciences, so in the following pages we set forth in terse form basic truths that should play a part in every religion, regardless of its beliefs. It is not the purpose of this article to speak of creeds or factions but merely to express fundamentals, and below are set forth a few factors which should be taken into consideration whether in choosing the path of the occult or walking the way of orthodoxy.

In this day of modern misconceptions where new doctrines and isms spring up over night and disappear in the same manner, where thousands of people believe themselves inspired and seek to convince others of their inspiration, a great confusion arises which can only be coped with by those whose feet are on the firm foundation of truth and knowledge. Most people are hopelessly indirect in their statements and hopelessly undecided in their concepts and precepts. Evasive answers that arise from ignorance parading under the cloak of knowledge are usually found when the student asks for direct information on fundamentals, and it is to in some way to cope with this problem that the writer has compiled the following statements, not to be believed or accepted but only to be considered:

The first great question is; what is religion? Concisely summed up, it would seem that religion would receive classification under such a definition as this:

A religion is a phase of truth attuned to the state of consciousness or understanding of the one who is evolving through it. It is the doctrine, part of a still greater doctrine, to which we are drawn by the faculties we have developed and the understanding we have unfolded within ourselves. It is a changeable point. As we grow in experience and understanding our religion and religious concepts should broaden with us.

In other words, we may say that our religion is our answer to the problem of being or the answer which we have accepted as being in harmony with our own consciousness and outlook on life. Everything in the universe is a matter of viewpoint; at one viewpoint a certain truth seems divine while to another it is heresy—and the whole scheme of things is a matter of what we are and how life looks to us.

A correct religion for us is one which explains to us in a reasonable, rational way the miracle and wonders of life, offers us the proper incentive and environment for further growth and individualization, supports us in the hours of extremity, is in harmony with divine justice as we see it, and in no way compromises the highest and finest that we have and are.

* * *

There are certain things which a student must beware of, regardless of his religion or creed, for there are certain fundamental errors which produce only one result and can never be right under any

conditions, except of course when considered in the line of experience and of learning through mistakes. Of those we will speak first for they are earmarks by which the spiritual status of individuals or doctrines can be infallibly judged. They have nothing to do with the gods we worship, with names or personalities, but concern only the life and the practical applications of truths which are similar wherever they are inspired by the divine urge.

First: Wherever a narrow mind is found, there look out for trouble. There is nothing on the face of God's green creation as absolurely hopeless as an individual with a closed mind; he is the Alpha and Omega of failure. Creeds which encourage and promulgate the idea of the closed mind, one which has learned enough already, are dangerous regardless of name or ideals. There are certain doctrines prevalent at this day and age which instruct their followers that they are to look nowhere but to said creed for light and that all the other philosophies in the universe are of no account. These doctrines of religion are the height of foolishness and should not be countenanced for a moment by any intelligent seeker after spirituality. And sad to relate, but occultism of today is being impregnated with the same bigotry which hold the conventional religions of yesterday and the so-called mystic arts are bringing upon their own heads the destruction that falls upon all narrow-minded creeds and religions.

The doctrines of Affirmation and Denial are the next that come under our consideration, for they are pitfalls into which the unsuspecting student falls with great ease and efficiency. People who go around through the streets or walk the floors at night repeating for the nine millioneth time, "I am prosperity; riches and the fullness thereof are mine!" may through the mental powers which they awaken pay the board bill and wear diamonds but they will never in any case be spiritual or unfold the qualities of right living within their own being. The Wisdom Teachings do not advocate or allow their students and followers to apply these mental powers for self-aggrandizement or the furtherance of personal aims. It is merely a form of self-hypnosis or auto-suggestion and in both cases it is not only useless but absolutely destructive to the finer sentiments and powers which the true student is seeking to unfold. People who go into religion because they want to stop working or who take up a creed for the purpose of getting healing, cash or power out of it have stamped themselves as absolutely unworthy of receiving any real value from the teaching involved and in spite of all that may be said to the contrary, such students in the ultimate never amount to much.

Another group which should be carefully noted and their mistakes avoided are those who advertise the fact that they are going to live forever. Thousands of people have a horror of death and scalawags of all kinds promise perpetual youth and the elixir of life to foolish dupes who listen then start out to live forever but always die in the due course of time like everybody else. None of the sacred orders working with the while may promise eternal life to any save the initiate who must secure same by passing from seven to nine initiations consciously, which process requires years, yes lives, of purity and preparation and absolute self-mastery. The initiate never promises man anything except an opportunity to work, and those creeds or doctrines which promise more should be watched carefully for they have an axe to grind. Every occult or mystical fraternity which places a price upon initiation is a fraud without further notice. There are many schools of the so-called mysteries who will make you a Lord High Somebody or ordain you a Grand Visor of Plunkit for from anywhere from a dollar ninty-eight up. The student can take it with absolute certainty that such organizations

are frauds, pure and unadulterated, and that a blind alley awaits those who are foolish enough to believe that spirituality lies behind. The same taboo is placed upon all doctrines which advocate and promulgate the soul-mate and kindred ideals, all of which are not only against the doctrines of the sacred schools but are against common sense and the harmony of being.

There is another very dangerous class who are consciously wrong-doers and they are those who seek to entice individuals to join them in their nefarious practices, such as silent circles for develcpment and the work of unduly influencing others against their will or without their knowledge. Those schemes for ultra personality development are charlatanism purely and simply and students who are caught in them must expect to pay the price in time, money and health. The great something-for-nothing idea has brought out hundreds, yes thousands, of individuals willing and glad, apparently, to part with their hard earned money and waste life's precious moments in hope that they will avoid or get around some obstacle which their brothers must face. Wherever this is encouraged or the idea of its possibility is promulgated, there is nothing to learn of value in it.

Then there is one other class that seem to be with us always and they are the ones who ignorantly oppose every step in human progress. Anyone who dares to get out of the rut is branded, cursed, flayed and crucified by those who know absolutely nothing about anything but are filled with a great zeal to preserve and conform with accepted customs. The worker who is watching the opposition rays through the doctrines of evolution at the present time and the persecution that descends upon those who try to express a broad-minded concept, realizes that the truth and value of his work lies in the fact that he is able to offend people. The fact that he is capable of arousing the ire of the convention-bound and of endangering the complacency of accepted conditions practically proves conclusively that he is worth while, for the operation of cutting out crystalization from the body of the race human is a painful one and you can always take it for granted that when you throw a bombshell into the world and someone cries out in great wrath, he is the person you hit with said bomb.

Having set out these few words of suggestion for consideration as to the choosing of a teaching, let us briefly consider the foundations upon which the student should base his study of occultism, for there are certain things he must have knowledge of before he is intelligently prepared to express himself on these important matters.

First: The student must have a great desire, which desire must be of a truly selfless kind; some great altruistic, humanitarian and impersonal desire must fill his soul which is to be the base of his study. It must be a desire to give rather than to receive, to serve rather than be served, and to learn only that he may teach, without thought of self or suffering. With this as a basis the worker is prepared to lay the foundation of practical living knowledge to be used to raise the superstructure of spirituality upon.

The first study he should begin is of his own organism, his being and the powers which animate and labor with it. The great slogan: "Man, know thyself" : is of first importance. Therefore he must learn of himself and the things which are needed by his body in his growth and development. Having learned these lessons, he must then seek to know of the laws governing the universe and of how to be a master of the seven natural laws which are the base of phenomena.

An occultist who is not an evolutionist will find himself at a loss, for all of the laws of nature illustrate the principle that God is not ever-creating but ever-evolving, a very important difference.

He must then learn to realize his own responsibility in the world and realize that the individuality of a man holds him responsible for each thing he does.

And he must also realize that he only knows what he lives, and must believe the rest. True progress is based upon knowledge, not belief.

From there he may raise his noble motives and his air-castles of rainbow tints, for if he has the solid foundation of knowledge and practical understanding he is safe from the willy-nilly blowing of those who are slaves to concept and their own imagination. If he will weigh all that he learns by the scales of reason he can find whether or not the things he hears are of value or not. And it is not done by analyzing the person who says them but by the quality and intrinsic merit of the words themselves.

Below are listed a series of questions and if the doctrines or creeds under consideration do not give satisfactory answer to these questions, answers in harmony with nature and not with miracles, then they are amiss somewhere along the line. The answer "yes" should be given honestly by the creeds involved to each of the following:

1. Is it a doctrine of effort and individual responsibility?
2. Is it a doctrine untouched by commercialism for selfish ends?
3. Is it productive of individual thought?
4. Is it a doctrine of cause and effect?
5. Is it a doctrine of natural evolution instead of impossible miracles?
6. Is it a doctrine free from threats of damnation?
7. Is it a doctrine of principles rather than personalities?
8. Is it a slow but sure philosophy?
9. Is it free from peace, power and prosperity scheming?
10. Is it a doctrine of equality?
11. Is it fearless in its declaration of principles?
12. Is it free from perverted sex philosophy?
13. Does it teach the growth and development of the body?
14. Does it teach compassion and renunciation?
15. Is it free from egotism?
16. Does it teach brotherhood and cooperation?
17. Does it make no claims save those of seeking to serve?
18. Does it teach the seven liberal arts and sciences?
19. Does it teach that there is only one religion and that xx all?
20. Is it free from mushiness and much wordiness?
21. Does it teach right living, right diet and right thought?

If the philosophy you are interested in teaches these things in a rational way and can answer "yes" honestly, then follow it, study it and learn of it; but if it fails to live up to these basic principles then shun it carefully and seek something better. For Truth is a very elusive thing and the basis of its discovery is the truth that comes to a body, mind and spirit that are true to themselves and each other. And no wisdom can come save where its shrine is built in purity, cooperation and fellowship.

THE END.

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